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VI.—IMPRISONED ENGLISH AUTHORS AND THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY OF BOETHIUS.

Sir Thomas More, best known perhaps as the author of *Utopia*, cherished the teachings of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and was cheered by them while awaiting death in the Tower of London.¹ In fact, he is said to have had the *Consolation* with him during his imprisonment.² That he wrote in imitation of it at that time we know through his work entitled, *A Dialogue of Coumfort agaynst Tribulacion*.³ Convincing evidence of More's familiarity with the *Consolation of Philosophy* is contained in Holbein's picture, *The More Family Group*. In the study in Indian ink, now in the Basel Gallery, More's daughter, Margaret, holds the *Consolation of Philosophy* in her hand; but in the finished painting now at Nostell Priory the composition is somewhat altered. Arthur B. Chamberlain in describing these changes says: 'The various accessories in the room have also been to some extent changed. . . . The titles of the books are given in most cases. Thus Margaret Roper holds open Seneca's *Oedipus* at the chorus in Act IV, Elizabeth Dancey has Seneca's *Epistles* under her arm, while Boetius de *Consolatione Philosophiae* is on the sideboard.'⁴ When we remember that Holbein was lodged at Sir Thomas More's house during many years of his sojourn in England we have good reason for accepting his composition as significant.

Among other English authors who, while imprisoned, drew comfort from the *Consolation* are John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, who sent an imitation of it to his royal and captive mistress, Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1572; and King James the First of Scotland who, as he himself tells us, gained inspiration for his greatest work, *The Kingis Quair*, through reading the *Consolation* of Boethius as he lay in bed unable to rest.

Concerning the *Consolation* of Philosophy and King James

¹ Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, 3, 514.

² Sedgfield, *King Alfred's Version of the Consolation of Boethius*, Introduction, p. xvii.

³ *Everyman's Library*, No. 461.

⁴ Hans Holbein the Younger, 1, 296.

the First, Washington Irving, in his *A Royal Poet*, says: 'From the high eulogism in which he (King James) indulges, it is evident that this was one of his favorite volumes while in prison: and indeed it is an admirable text-book for meditation under adversity. It is the legacy of a noble and enduring spirit, purified by sorrow and suffering, bequeathing to its successors in calamity the maxims of sweet morality and the trains of eloquent but simple reasoning, by which it was enabled to bear up against the various ills of life. It is a talisman, which the unfortunate may treasure up in his bosom, or, like the good King James, lay upon his nightly pillow.'

GUY BAYLEY DOLSON.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.